

Media & Government: I Can't Take It Anymore

by J.J. Johnson - Sierra Times Editor & Chief 10.24.01

Are We At War, or just a ratings bonanza for the media? Something has been bothering me all week, and I think I've put my finger on it. All we've been hearing about is the latest confirmed Anthrax test and stray bombs in Afghanistan. With this kind of information, there is no way we are going to win this war. And I am fed up with it.

Vice President Dick Cheney, who spoke at a charity dinner at New York's Waldorf-Astoria hotel in a rare public appearance on Thursday (10.18.01), told Americans to expect "permanent" changes in domestic security, "at least in the lifetime of most of us." In a fight against "evil people" who lack regard for human life, he warned: "For the first time in our history, we will probably suffer more casualties here at home in America than with our troops overseas."

George Stephanopoulos commented on ABC's Good Morning America the following morning by saying, "...This in effect, makes every citizen a soldier in this war."

Let that sink in real good.

So, why the heck are we talking about stray bombs 5000 miles away, and negotiating to talk to Osama bin Laden?

Media & Government: Here is what we need: Since George Stephanopoulos stated, , "...This in effect, makes every citizen a soldier in this war", we soldiers need some damn good intelligence if we have to go into battle and defend this country.

Releasing the contents of the first anthrax letters were a good start. Now, at least we have a better idea of what to look for. But here's more: You say bin Laden has a network in over 60 countries. How about detailing how this network is organized? That should not violate any national security. Just don't drop names of our guys. And if I hear from anyone in government that "we can't tell you about a threat because we're conducting an investigation", that'll just be one more reason to be convinced that we will loose this war.

There was reportedly a book found in the home or car of the hijackers about how to blend in, and where to live in America. How about making the complete text of that book public so the rest of us know what to look for?

Recently, and Turkish Man was picked up in Germany with a bio/chem suit, and other little nasty things. Among them, A CD-ROM was also discovered that included a training program for "God's warriors" with detailed instructions for joining the "holy war". Any chance of making this available for public view?

To the government and media: If you know of an attack - tell us. I don't want to hear this, 'live you life as normal, and stay calm'. That went out the window on September 11. If you would like Americans to 'feel' safe, here are some things you can do:

- 1) Close the borders - don't tell us it can't be done. It magically happened on Sept 11.
- 2) Pull every foreign tourist visa from the Middle East
- 3) Start deportation proceedings
- 4) Start Vaccination programs or start selling antidotes on the open market.

These are just a few things that should be done IMMEDIATELY.

We should be having government briefings once a week about how things are going - not just about the latest anthrax scare. Frankly, I really don't care what the military is up to over there. We are concerned about here.

This is where our war is.

You told us that if we see a suspicious letter, we should not touch it - just call the police. The Postal service say there are over 300 million pieces of mail a day. There are about 300,000 total law enforcement. They cannot watch everything. Americans have to be the eyes and ears on the ground here. Tell us what to look for, and stop talking in general themes.

And lastly, this so-called Patriot Act of 2001. Please explain how this piece of legislation fits in with the Bill of Rights. Silly me, I thought we were fighting to defend freedom, not extinguish it.

Just a few thoughts.

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